

Ex-Army Aide Tells Of Data on Leftists

By WILLIAM K. MANDEL
Of The Bulletin Staff

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was among those groups considered "potentially subversive" by Army intelligence agents, a former administrative assistant said yesterday.

Edward Sohler, 24, of 1134 Pine st., attached to the Counterintelligence Analysis Division of the Army in Alexandria, Va., until last August, said in an interview yesterday that "the Army stretched the imagination in designating groups of potential danger to the United States."

It was recently revealed that Army intelligence units have been gathering data on persons and organizations considered "trouble-prone," through the use of plainclothes agents and electronic listening devices.

Sohler, who gathered none of the information himself, was partly responsible for the

compilation of reports and forecasts incorporating the data gathered by Army sleuths.

Among the groups and persons considered potentially dangerous by the Army — and on whom dossiers were kept — were the American Civil Liberties Union, American Friends Service Committee, Quaker Action Group, NAACP, Martin Luther King Jr. and Julius Hobson (a member of the Washington, D.C. School Board. The two friends groups have headquarters in Philadelphia.

"Anyone who could be considered, by any stretch of the imagination, to be left of center was watched and data on him compiled," Sohler said.

Sohler said he knew of an incident in 1969 when an anti-war rally in Washington was filmed and taped by Army agents operating from a truck with "Midwest News" painted on the side.

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expressly forbids the Army to involve itself in domestic civilian intelligence.

"About 75 percent of the people we gathered data on were good, upstanding Americans," Sohler said. "The Army got carried away."

Studies at Temple

Sohler, who is now enrolled at Temple University, majoring in communications and theater, said he hoped for "public clamor" that would force the Army to change its policy.

Sohler was graduated from Great Valley High School in 1963, while he lived in Malvern, with his parents. He went to Bowdoin College in Maine for a year and then to West Chester State College for another year and a half before enlisting in the Army in October 1967.

After basic training at Ft. Bragg, N. C., he was assigned to the Adjutant General School at Ft. Benjamin Harrison in Indiana. He then was recruited by the 902 Military Intelligence group and was officially listed as a stenographer.

"Our office was an analysis office and I did an assortment of administrative tasks," Sohler said. From January to August last year, he said, much of his work was writing letters, replying to inquiries from citizens and public officials concerning the charges made against the Army.

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